

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS:

An International Social Work Field Placement requires a high level of personal maturity because the application and paperwork pre-departure process is often time intensive and requires that you are diligent with your time and efforts. You must be prepared to take personal responsibility for completing the process between the Department of Social Work and the Office of Global Education as well as for following through on tasks necessary to obtain a placement. Applying for an international placement does not guarantee that you will receive a placement.

## REQUIREMENTS:

1. Obtain acceptance letter for Screening and Selection from the Department of Social Work.
2. Maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA at the time of submitting the BSW International Field Placement Request Form and maintain that GPA through semester prior to departure. (See International Field Coordinator with any questions/concerns.)
3. Obtain approval from the Office of Global Education and the Department of Social Work to complete an International Social Work Field Placement.
4. Complete the Office of Global Education's International Social Work Field Placement application and Pre-Departure Paperwork before deadlines.

## CONSIDERING IF AN INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT IS RIGHT FOR YOU:

1. If you are generally interested in completing your social work placement abroad and you are in need of details to decide if an international placement is right for you, contact the following individuals to arrange your Initial Interest Meeting.
  - The Department of Social Work - Dr. Karen Rice, BSW International Field Coordinator at [Karen.Rice@millersville.edu](mailto:Karen.Rice@millersville.edu)
    - o Dr. Rice will cover the academic details regarding your senior placement and what it means to conduct your placement internationally.
  - The Office of Global Education - Olivia Peters, Global Education Program Coordinator at [Olivia.Peters@millersville.edu](mailto:Olivia.Peters@millersville.edu) in Cumberland House
    - o Olivia will cover details such as costs/financial aid, accommodations, what the placement provider offers, and the overall study abroad process.

## UPON RECEIVING ACCEPTANCE AFTER SOCIAL WORK SCREENING & SELECTION:

1. Schedule an interview with the Social Work International Field Coordinator.
2. Complete the International Social Work Field Placement Application and paperwork. Documents can be found by following the link contained in your Screening and Selection acceptance letter. See the International Social Work Field Placement Application Checklist for all the items you need to submit and to determine where you need to submit each item.
3. Submit your application and paperwork to the International Field Coordinator at least 1 week prior to your interview as well as the specific documents to Global Education.

## AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION & CONDUCTING YOUR INTERVIEW:

1. The Department of Social Work and the Office of Global Education will collaborate regarding your application.
2. The Office of Global Education will contact you via email regarding the status of your International Social Work Field Placement acceptance.
3. The Office of Global Education will work with you regarding the pre-departure process whereby additional forms will be required to be completed by a pre-determined deadline. Process. Failure to complete these forms will jeopardize your participation in the International Social Work Field Placement program.
4. Participation in a mandatory pre-departure orientation is required. The orientation date and time will be included in your acceptance letter.



## Elice Johnson



"Choosing to spend my last undergraduate semester in Cape Town was the best decision I have made thus far in life. I am thankful for my opportunity to complete my final practicum in one of South Africa's largest Townships, Khayelitsha, because I have had the chance to be fully submerged into the Black South African's culture. I will never forget the first day I went to Khayelitsha and saw goats and dogs walking down the sidewalk, shacks 2 inches apart, public toilets, and clean laundry drying on the clothes lines, my first thought was "how do people live

like this?" After a few weeks I got used to the Township scenery and was always excited for what I would find next. I quickly realized that this is the way of life that the majority of South Africans live and the amount of love and community is indescribable. Cape Town has changed my life for the better; I have matured as an individual, reassured myself why I chose to be a Social Worker, and gained a greater appreciation for my culture and where I come from. The friends and memories of this experience will be in my heart forever. I will truly miss coming home to 16 other people, hearing several different languages on a daily basis, and looking outside my window to see Devil's peak. Lastly, for the current and future interns, take a time to appreciate Cape Town's natural beauty, step out of your comfort zone to learn about another culture, challenge yourself in every way possible, and ENJOY your time here...it goes by FAST!"

*-Elice Johnson, pictured during the VACorps Friday Excursion to the Cape Point Nature Reserve.*

## Allison Boyer

"Visiting South Africa was never on my bucket list, but when it was the only international internship opportunity that my university offered, I jumped at the chance to get out of the States. And I am so glad I did because I fell in love with Cape Town after the first few days of being here!"

I enjoyed interning in the townships as it really opened my eyes to the struggles that people face on a daily basis. It's so easy to just get caught up in my own life and my personal frustrations. There are so many people all around us that endure more suffering than I ever will, yet they can greet a stranger with a smile. My heart broke as I saw children who didn't have parents to love them, enough food to eat, money to get to school, or who were sick and in pain. It was humbling to enter their shacks and be treated as royalty; the best they had to offer was what I would typically throw away back at home. These experiences often brought tears to my eyes as I was reminded how much I have been blessed, and how many opportunities there are to bless others, if only I look for them.

Living with people from around the world was such a great ! I love sharing cultures and describing our different traditions and ways of living. It was fun to learn new words in other languages and to help each other when trying to tell stories or describe things. I appreciated being able to meet so many new people just by hanging out with my housemates, or at the other VAC houses. We all made different friendships through our individual experiences here, and then these social circles would overlap, giving us the opportunity to develop that many more friendships.

The VAC staff has been such a support and encouragement as they go above and beyond to assist in making this the best exposure of living in a foreign country. They have been willing to help in any way possible, and have provided great stability and first-hand knowledge as we explore all that Cape Town, and the surrounding areas, has to offer. I am so grateful for the support that VAC has provided for me, and this experience has hopefully been only the beginning of my life in Cape Town."

*-Allison Boyer, pictured at far right, during an afternoon of volunteer work in the townships as part of a VACorps Friday Excursion.*



## Brittany McHale



"Spending three months away from home on the other side of the world while forced to adjust to a new culture and people can be stressful and intimidating. The second I arrived in Cape Town, I was met by Sly, shown around by Jon and introduced to some of the other interns. Not only for the first week of my time here, but for all of the three months I spent here in Cape Town, I felt confident, supported and surrounded by people who were only looking out for my best interest.

The staff at VACorps are always present whether in a professional setting or just as friends. As a result of the Friday activities, I felt much more familiar with not only Cape Town but also the surrounding areas. After speaking with students attending a university or taking part in another program, I do not feel an intern could find a better experience in Cape Town through a program other than VACorps. I will leave Cape Town more knowledgeable about South African culture, more aware of myself as a professional social worker and able to say "Xhosa." I have learned to scuba dive, tried surfing and sailboat racing, hiked, went wine tasting, laid on the beach, tried a variety of different foods, took an incredible trip to Mozambique and most importantly formed new relationships with amazing people."

*-Brittany McHale participated in a social work internship in Cape Town through the Volunteer Adventure Corps internship from January-April of 2011.*